

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting  
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)  
February 27, 2001**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted the Environmental Work Group meeting on February 27, 2001 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary of the discussion for information purposes for interested parties who could not attend the meeting.

### **Introduction**

Attendees were welcomed to the Environmental Work Group meeting. The meeting objectives were discussed. The Environmental Work Group Meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees and their affiliations are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Notes recorded on flip charts during the meeting are included as Attachment 3.

### **Action Items – January 23, 2001 Environmental Work Group Meeting**

The facilitator reviewed the status of action items from the previous Environmental Work Group meeting.

**Action Item #E7:** Presentation by Native American Tribes regarding their responsibilities in the FERC relicensing Process.

Status: Tribal representatives will try to be ready to make their presentation at the next Environmental Work Group meeting.

**Action Item #E8:** Response by the City of Oroville regarding their water rights.

Status: A city representative reported that the City of Oroville has no rights to State Water Project water. Inquiries were made to Butte County, and they are still investigating the issue. DWR staff indicated that the City could purchase SWP water, however it would likely be more expensive than alternatives available.

**Action Item #E9:** Response by DWR regarding demand projections on SWP resources.

Status: DWR staff indicated that demand on SWP resources through the State Water Contractors is at contract maximum. Contracts with SWC call for 4 million acre-feet of firm supply per year, but deliveries depend on annual hydrology. SWC contracts for SWP water will be renegotiated in 2035.

**Action Item #E10:** Review IIP and develop additional issues for Scoping Document.

Status: The IIP and additional issues will be reviewed in today's meeting.

### **Roles and Responsibilities in FERC Relicensing**

Representatives from local Tribes and the Bureau of Land Management requested that their presentations be postponed to the next Environmental Work Group meeting.

Two items were added to the agenda:

Steve Edmondson of the National Marine Fisheries Service was asked to comment on a Biological Opinion of existing facilities operations effects on steelhead and spring-run Chinook salmon.

Steve Ford of the Department of Water Resources was asked to report on the status of environmental interest tours for the Environmental Work Group.

### **Biological Opinion (BO) on Existing Project Operations**

Steve Edmondson with NMFS reported on the status of an on-going Section 7 consultation between DWR, NMFS and FWS, regarding the impacts of current facilities operations on steelhead and spring-run Chinook salmon populations. He reported that the draft BO covering operations for

a twelve-month period starting in March 2001 would be out shortly. He explained that this was an interagency consultation and would not necessarily be open to public review or comment. He added that DWR, NMFS and FWS were exploring ways to integrate the BO with the relicensing process, and that he would keep the Environmental Work Group apprised of the progress of the consultation.

### **Facilities Tours**

Steve Ford reported that DWR staff was making arrangements to have facilities tours for interested work group participants. The Environmental Work Group responded that they would be interested in seeing significant environmental areas as well as being shown basic facilities operations. Steve indicated that DWR was happy to accommodate individuals interested in arranging tours on their own as well as the intention to identify specific dates for participants to take a tour together.

### **Review of Initial Information Package and Development of Scoping Statements**

The Environmental Work Group is tasked with developing a series of issue statements for inclusion in the Scoping Document. The Scoping Document, required by FERC and NEPA, identifies issues associated with the relicensing of the Oroville Facilities and guides the development of studies necessary to address each issue (Recreation & Socioeconomics, Aquatic & Terrestrial Habitat, Operations & Engineering, etc.).

In developing the Scoping Document, certain baseline information from the IIP will be utilized. Wayne Dyok of the consulting team stressed that it was important that the IIP be factually correct, however the IIP would not be rewritten. Instead errata sheets would be developed and distributed to participants amending information in the IIP. The Environmental Work Group agreed that comments on the IIP should be provided to DWR as soon as possible, and requested that the Plenary Group set a final deadline for IIP comments at their next meeting.

Wayne provided a draft schedule outlining critical paths to developing the Scoping Document and subsequent work products, and how they relate to work group meetings for the next year. Wayne reminded the Environmental Work Group that field studies were anticipated to begin in early 2002 and that this draft schedule would help the Work Groups and the Plenary Group meet that target. Wayne added that the Plenary Group would be reviewing the draft schedule at their next meeting (2/28/01). The draft schedule, including important milestones for developing the Scoping Document, Study Plan development, and critical Work Group and Plenary Group decision points is appended to this summary as Attachment 4.

- One participant wanted to know what the FERC license authorized DWR to do. Jim Fargo of FERC answered that the license covered the impacts resulting from facilities operations both within and to a certain point outside the project boundary. Issues discussed in the license include ramping rates, in-stream flows below the dam, power generation, etc.
- The Environmental Work Group discussed how the scope of impacts outside the project boundary should be considered. DWR staff responded that the Work Groups needed to carefully consider the scope of each study, adding that too broad a scope may include impacts that are only marginally related to Oroville operations and may be difficult to address.

### **Issue Statements**

The facilitator and Wayne Dyok lead the Environmental Work Group in a discussion regarding the development of issue statements. The Environmental Work Group was provided with two versions of a sample issue statement focusing on environmental issues. Wayne then gave the Environmental Work Group an example of a detailed Preliminary Issue Sheet focusing on the same subject. Once issues are crafted into statements for inclusion in the Scoping Document, the group will expand each issue with an Issue Sheet that will include identification of resource goals, objectives, information available, additional study needs relative to that issue, and scope of the

inquiry. The Draft Issue Statement Development handout and the Preliminary Issue Sheet are appended to this summary as Attachments 5 and 6, respectively.

The group recognized that the issue statements would drive the studies conducted and therefore had to accurately reflect the Work Group's desires.

- Several participants felt that more information regarding agency guidelines and the Endangered Species Act were needed in order to develop a comprehensive set of issue statements. There was concern that issues could be identified, then pre-empted by provisions of the ESA. A request was made that links to participating agency web sites be included on the Oroville Facilities Relicensing web site.

DWR provided the Environmental Work Group with a list of issue statements identified during earlier Plenary, Work Group and/or Public meetings. The statements had not been edited, but had been grouped into categories emphasizing geography and technical focus. The Environmental Work Group reviewed the list and provided clarification on specific statements and added some additional issues. A complete list of comments on issue statements can be found as part of the Flip-Chart notes in Attachment 3.

### *Task Force*

The Environmental Work Group agreed that the consulting team should take the first cut at developing the scoping statements and then a Task Force should be initiated to review, comment, and revise them for presentation to the Environmental Work Group at their next meeting.

Task Force members are: Mike Meinz, Woody Elliot, Steve Edmondson, Mike Taylor, Annette DeBrotherton, Sharon Stohrer, Chuck Bonham, Rick Sits, Bruce Steidl, Eric See, Ron Davis, Dick Dunkel and Ray Gannett.

The Task Force will meet on March 19, 2001 at the DWR, Oroville Field Division at 460 Glen Drive, Oroville, CA from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### **Next Meeting**

The Environmental Work Group discussed their short-term meeting schedule as it relates to the Scoping Document. They agreed to cluster their meeting around the Recreation & Socioeconomic Work Group and Plenary Meetings.

The Environmental Work Group agreed to the following three month schedule:

	Date:	Tuesday, March 20, 2001
	Time:	9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
	Location:	Eagles Hall
And		
	Date:	Thursday, April 19, 2001
	Time:	9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
	Location:	To be announced
And		
	Date:	Tuesday, May 22, 2001
	Time:	9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
	Location:	To be announced

### **Agreements Made**

1. The Environmental Work Group agreed to develop a Task Force charged with evaluating and revising as appropriate the draft issue statements developed by the consulting team for the Scoping Document. Revised statements would then be presented to the Environmental Work Group at their next meeting.
2. The Environmental Work Group agreed to provide comments on the IIP to DWR staff before the next Environmental Work Group meeting or a scheduled set by the Plenary Group.
3. The Environmental Work Group agreed to meet again on March 20, 2001 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Eagles Hall, on April 19, 2001 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and May 22 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (locations to be announced).

### **Action Items**

The following list of action items identified by the Environmental Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

**Action Item #E11:** Request the Plenary Group set a due date for IIP comments/corrections  
**Responsible:** DWR Staff  
**Due Date:** February 28, 2001

**Action Item #E12:** Identify potential studies to take advantage of 2000-2001 hydrologic conditions  
**Responsible:** DWR Staff  
**Due Date:** March 20, 2001

**Action Item #E13:** Provide links at the Oroville Facilities Relicensing web site to participating agency web sites for their guidelines and mandates  
**Responsible:** DWR Staff  
**Due Date:** March 20, 2001

**Action Item #E14:** Distribute Master Issues List to Environmental Work Group  
**Responsible:** Consulting staff  
**Due Date:** March 20, 2001

**Action Item #E15:** Provide comments on IIP to DWR  
**Responsible:** Environmental Work Group Participants  
**Due Date:** March 20, 2001

**Action Item #E16:** DWR to provide draft Errata for IIP to the Environmental Work Group by mid-April  
**Responsible:** DWR Staff  
**Due Date:** April 13, 2001